

Montana Child and Family Services Strategic Initiatives – August 2016 Update



The Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) is continuously working to improve operations and services in order to serve children and families in Montana more effectively and efficiently. Along with the needs of Montana children and families, there are many complex Federal and State laws, rules, and regulations that govern the work of the Division and define the outcomes that this plan targets for tracking and improvement. This document is intended to communicate current strategic initiatives underway within the Division to stakeholders and all Montanans. Furthermore, it is intended to provide a foundation for future work with all division stakeholders aimed at system improvement.

State of Montana
Department of Public Health and
Human Services
Child and Family Services
Richard Oppen, Director
8/25/2016

How We Keep Children Safe and Families Strong

The Mission, vision and core values for the Child and Family Services Division form the foundation of all work done in the Division.

Mission Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong

Statement of Purpose

To protect children who have been or are at substantial risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment. We strive to assure that all children have a family who will protect them from harm. We recognize the protective capacities of families and incorporate them in assessments, decision making and actions with the goal of improving safety, permanency and well-being for children. We encourage our communities to strengthen their prevention efforts and to share responsibility for the safety of its children and families.

Core Values

Children have the right to grow and develop in safe and permanent family environments

The safety of children is dependent on the actions/omissions of adults

When families and communities collaborate, the possibility for success is increased

The safety of children in our care is dependent upon multi-level stewardship of human and financial resources

The following strategies are divided into six key results areas (KRAs). The KRAs are areas in which the Division must excel in order to stabilize the current workforce shortage and succeed in accomplishing its mission. The strategies are the high-level, ongoing or one-time methods we are employing in our programs that are intended to improve the capacity and performance of the Division in the next 3-5 years.

Strategies	Status	PMK
Key Results Area: Workforce Excellence		
1. Hiring a Human Resources Specialist to assist with the recruiting and onboarding of Division staff in an effort to strategically develop the workforce, assist supervisors with hiring paperwork, and reduce delays in the hiring process	complete	II.A.2.c
2. Ensuring that all staff are trained in trauma informed systems at the MCAN training for all new workers	complete	II.B.7.b
3. Eliminating the Field Services Administrator position to allow the Division Administrator to directly supervise the Regional Administrators	complete	II.A.2.c
4. Creating a training unit to improve the development and ongoing education of all staff	complete	II.A.2.c II.B.7.c
5. Prioritizing training for newer workers and supervisors internally by implementing a supervisor training for all CFSD supervisors, and creating a one-year orientation process for new workers	complete	II.B.7.a II.B.8.b

6. Implementing a simulation lab as part of the new worker training	complete	II.A.2.c
7. Hiring a Complaint and Critical Incident Manager , and training staff in the application of safety science as a first step to developing a new team-based critical incident response model	complete	II.A.2.c
8. Creating a Region 6 to respond to the needs in Northwest Montana, which includes hiring a Regional Administrator and other regional staff	complete	II.A.2.c
9. Piloting the Employee Assistance Program's "Resilience" coaching program in one office to determine whether to expand to other employees in the Division	complete	II.A.2.c B.5.c
10. Advance-filling Child Protection Specialist (CPS) positions in offices with the highest turnover rates to maintain the number of CPS in the office and keep caseload averages from increasing	ongoing	II.A.2.c
11. Partnering with the University of Montana School of Social Work to offer Title IV-E stipends to partially cover costs of BSW and MSW students in return for a commitment to work at the CFSD for a specified period of time upon receipt of degree	ongoing	II.A.2.c II.B.5.a II.B.7.d
12. Utilizing hiring assessments for CPS positions to assist supervisors in hiring workers who are better suited for the work of a CPS	ongoing	II.A.2.c
13. Implementing Step 1 of a career ladder for CPS positions, and working with HR and the labor management committee to complete additional steps in career ladder development (with two tracks: one for supervisors and one for master practitioners who wish to remain CPS workers)	in-process	II.B.6.a
14. Partnering with the University of Montana School of Social Work to revise new worker training (online), training for foster parents, and supervisor training	in-process	II.A.2.c
15. Conduct periodic brief web based anonymous workplace culture surveys with a plan for immediate follow-up on results and plans to address identified issues.	in-process	II.B.4.c
16. Investigating the use of GIS mapping to conduct a workload study that reviews the amount of time necessary to complete tasks for particular types of cases.	in-process	II.B.4.d
17. Conduct regular evaluations of CFSD leadership for the central office administrators, region administrators and supervisor levels	in-process	II.B.8.a II.B.8.b
Key Results Area: Operational Excellence		
18. Providing all CPS staff with mobile tablets and smart phones	complete	II.A.2.c
19. Contracting with the Council on Accreditation to do an assessment to determine what would be needed for CFSD to meet public child welfare agency accreditation standards	complete	II.A.2.b

(scheduled for the onsite review in 2016 after updated standards are finalized and released)		
20. Improving communication within the CFSD by temporarily hiring an Outreach Officer to prioritize efforts to increase transparency, and effective communication by developing internal and external communication plans for the CFSD.	complete	II.A.3.a II.A.3.b
21. Forming separate Intake and Ongoing Units in field offices with sufficient staff to allow for worker specialization	complete <i>in offices where appropriate</i>	II.A.2.c
22. Creating a CFSD Deputy Administrator position to oversee the Fiscal and Operations Bureau, the Program Bureau, the Division Epidemiologist, the Training Unit, and the new electronic case management project, and prioritizing the hiring of a new CFSD Administrator	complete	II.A.1.c
23. Updating and reformatting policies and procedures to follow international standards, to allow for policy to better reflect workflow, and to assist staff in readily accessing necessary policies and procedures	in-process	II.A.2.c II.B.10.a II.B.10.b
24. Working to develop a new State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). Completing Phase I implementation of the new case management system for intake and investigations by January 2017.	In-process	II.A.2.c
25. Utilizing all data from the Protect Montana Kids Commission, Accreditation Gap Analysis, Legislative Audit, Ombudsman recommendations, and Federal On-Site Review/Audit to define the needs and strategic direction of the Child and Family Services Plan (long-term strategic plan)	in-process	II.B.3.d II.B.4.a
Key Results Area: Child Welfare System Improvement		
26. Add a formal agenda item to the State Advisory Council quarterly meetings to specifically review the implementation of recommendations from the Governor or the Legislature related to the Protect Montana Kids Commission's work.	complete	II.A.4.a
27. Review and formalize the State Advisory Council Bylaws, update membership with needed stakeholder groups, and ensure appropriate representation in all areas.	in-process	II.A.4.a
28. Implement evidence-based safety science practices to build open, transparent, and effective communication strategies by increasing opportunities to engage in meaningful communication internally between staff, youth, natural, foster, kin and adoptive families and externally with providers, agencies, the legislature and other stakeholders.	in-process	II.B.3.a
29. Implementing of "Child and Family Stat" to monitor data in all key results areas: Centralized Intake, Investigations and Assessment, Intervention/Case Management, Resource Families, Workforce Excellence, Operational Excellence, and Child Welfare System Improvement	in-process	II.A.2.c II.B.4.e II.B.9.a II.B.9.b

30. Exploring opportunities for collaboration and partnership to serve Indian children and families with tribal governments.	in-process	II.B.12.c
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Key Results Area: Investigation/Assessment

31. Implementing the SAMS (Safety Assessment and Management System) model, with Montana modifications, to meet statutory timelines and audit findings; as well as, to prepare for Round 3 of the Federal Child and Family Services Review (SAMS was implemented as a requirement of the Federally required CFSR Round 2 Program Improvement Plan)	ongoing	II.A.2.a
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Key Results Area: Intervention/Case Management

32. Implementing and/or training of providers in evidence-based models: Safe Care Augmented home visiting model and Safety, Permanency, Well-Being Round Tables as examples of a Universal Checklist to assist in monitoring safety, permanency, and well-being indicators (based on state and federal law) in real-time for cases	ongoing	II.A.2.c
33. Partnering with the Court Assessment Program on pilot projects across the state to implement Pre-Hearing Conferences and Court Diversion programs in an effort to increase the efficiency of the legal process while improving outcomes for children and families	ongoing	II.A.2.c
34. Providing ICWA Training to all staff in September 2016 and ensuring compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), including the new Federal regulations, with emphasis on permanency and collective responsibility and integration of ICWA and CFSD.	in-process	II.B.12.a II.B.12.b

Key Results Area: Resource Families

35. Exploring opportunities for partnership and collaboration with other public and private agencies and organizations for services such as, home studies, licensing and training for foster and adoptive families; implementation of best practices/promising practice tools such as a telehealth platform for field staff training, support and case review; and stronger relationships with private providers, the tribes, reservations and urban Indians in Montana	not yet started	II.B.11.a
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